

Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District News and Views

July 2008

Volume 11 Issue I

Raymond Caughman to be Inducted into the Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame

Mr. Raymond Caughman; banker, salesman, farmer, commissioner, and friend, was nominated for the Southeast Region Conservation Hall of Fame by the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District. Mr. Caughman served as Commissioner on the Conservation District board for over 20 years, and has served as an Associate Commissioner for over ten. In addition to serving on the board, he was the treasurer of both the SC Association of Conservation Districts and the Conservation Districts Foundation.



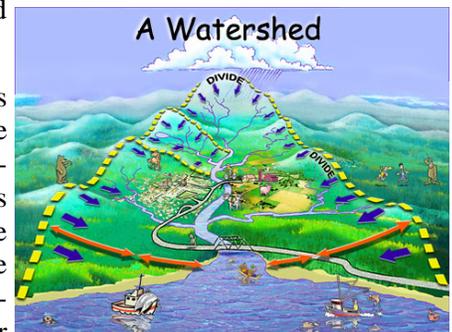
Mr. Caughman has consistently supported conservation efforts throughout his life, not only through his work on the conservation district board, but through his years as a banker, through his political involvement, and through his own work farming. He has set an example for younger generations by being an ideal steward of the land and a man of his word.

Anyone who knows him, knows he is well deserving of this honor, and the Southeast Region judging committee agreed! Although Mr. Caughman will not travel to Mississippi to accept his place in the Hall of Fame, he will be honored during a luncheon on August 11 in Biloxi, MS at the SE National Association of Conservation Districts Regional Meeting. Congratulations Mr. Caughman, and thank you for your dedication and years of service to Conservation Districts!

WHAT IS A WATERSHED? AND WHY SHOULD I CARE?

A watershed is simply the geographic area through which water flows across the land and drains into a common body of water, whether a stream, river, lake, or ocean. It includes tributaries (wetlands, streams, canals, ditches, etc.) as well as stormwater runoff from the land. Watersheds are usually separated from other watersheds by naturally elevated areas.

Your watershed is important because we all live in a watershed. Watersheds are the places we call home, where we work and play. Everyone relies on water and other natural resources to exist. What you and others do on the land impacts the quality and quantity of water.



Healthy watersheds are vital for a healthy environment and economy. Our watersheds provide water for drinking, irrigation and industry. Many people also enjoy lakes and streams for boating, fishing and swimming. Wildlife also need healthy watersheds for food and shelter.

In the past, most water quality problems were traced to the most obvious cause, point source pollution. This means the problem can be traced to a specific location such as a pipe or disposal site. Technical and regulatory methods have been used to detect and control these problems. Much progress has been made.

However problems from nonpoint-source pollution are more difficult to isolate and control. These sources are

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All federal, state and local programs and services provided through the Lexington Conservation District are offered on a nondiscriminatory basis, without regard to race, color, national origin, gender, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or familial status.

Biologically Speaking

by Bill Melven

Ponds and hot weather should be a concern for all fish pond owners. The water in ponds is a dynamic system, always changing. We tell our school students that “All Things Are Connected”. This is especially true with ponds.

High air temperatures and bright sunlight speed up the natural processes going on in pond water. The algae start growing rapidly. The higher aquatic plants grow pro-



fusely. The water in the pond starts to “layer” which is caused by different temperatures from top to bottom. The water layers have different water chemistries caused by increased biological decomposition due to increased water temperatures in especially the bottom layer. More undesirable gasses are trapped in these lower layers of water. These layers of water do not mix together very much. The bad quality layers will actually build up in size leaving the best quality water in the small top layer.

Everything in the pond, living or dying, is using oxygen in the water. Granted, it takes sunlight and the microscopic single celled algae to produce most of the oxygen in water. Any treatment for excessive growth of algae or aquatic plants with chemicals can set off a chain reaction causing fish to go into stress. Mechanical removal, pulling or raking, is hand work but will have less impact on the water quality during these hot months.

Just be very careful when using chemicals during this time of hot weather.

The best advice for hot summer weather is to stop fertilizing the water and keep the bloom density “green color” in the water not too dense. If the white object goes out of sight at 16 to 18 inches this is ok. If it goes out of sight at less than a foot the bloom density is too much. Drastic changes in water chemistry affect fish populations.

Having a feature on the riser called a “bottom water release” helps to improve the size (volume) of the upper layer we consider as being the best, with plenty of oxygen. If any water is leaving the pond it is taken from the bottom layers, not the top.

We have already had reports of fish kills. Hope it was not at your pond.

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often hard to identify and difficult to measure. Non-point source pollutants are in the water that runs off crop or forest land. Others include failing septic systems, parking lots, construction sites, irrigation systems and drainage systems. It can even result from automobile exhaust getting into the atmosphere and falling back to earth in the rain.

A partnership among all who live in a watershed can help identify concerns, educate those involved and encourage them to take action. Watershed management plans focus on prevention of pollution. This is easier and cheaper than trying to cleanup a watershed after the fact. Get involved in YOUR watershed!

For more information on Watersheds, go to EPA's website at <http://www.epa.gov/OWOW/watershed/> or call the Conservation District Office at (803) 359-3165 ext. 3.

Stormwater Education

Laying the groundwork for Stormwater Management in Lexington County has been going slow for a purpose. Having change always takes time to understand and accept.

When the county was granted authorization from DHEC to manage NPDES Phase II of the EPA's Clean Water Act, the county, along with the Towns of Irmo, Springdale, South Congaree, Pine Ridge, Lexington and the Cities of West Columbia and Cayce chose to contract with Clemson Extension Service to utilize its Carolina Clear program to handle the education and outreach part of the plan. Through this contract the Lexington Countywide Stormwater Consortium was formed.

The creation of the Lexington Countywide Stormwater Consortium (LCSC) coordinates the use of local resources and expertise to achieve economy of scale by jointly addressing common needs of the cities and county, and provide uniformity in educational messages to enhance learning. The LCSC will stress stormwater education through involvement and outreach programs which support healthy, fishable and swimmable waterways.

The LCSC is already forming partnerships with local governments, citizens, businesses and organizations to enhance water quality throughout the County. You will see much more about LCSC's efforts in the coming months.

For more information contact Synithia Williams at (803) 785-8634.

Candidates for Hollow Creek Watershed Directors being sought for the 2008 General Election



EQIP Information

By Rafael Méndez

Dear Farmers and Landowners of Lexington County,

The purpose of this letter is to inform you that in fiscal year 2008 the Environmental Quality Incentives Program (EQIP) helped with \$68,681.00 in 7 contracts implementing conservation practices.

Conservation Practices are designed to reduce the loss of soil, nutrients, and other biological and chemical materials from agricultural lands to conserve natural resources, enhance the quality of ecosystems and enhance wildlife habitat. EQIP offers cost share funds to assist producers in implementing conservation practices. **The closing date to participate in next year's program will be September 30, 2008.**

People who are engaged in livestock or agricultural production on eligible land may participate in the EQIP program. EQIP may cost share up to 50 percent of the cost of certain conservation practices. Incentive payments may be provided for up to three years to encourage producers to carry out management practices they may not otherwise use without the incentive. EQIP activities are carried out with a conservation plan developed in conjunction with the producer that identifies the appropriate conservation practice or practices to address the resource concern.

Some conservation practices that qualify for cost share on cropland are nutrient management, filter strips, grassed waterways, tree and shrub establishment, waste management systems and waste storage facilities. Practices for grazing lands are fencing, pasture and hay planting, pipelines, water troughs, and wells.

For more information on how you may benefit from EQIP or to make an application for cost share assistance, please contact the Natural Resources Conservation Service at 359-3165 ext. 3 or come by the office located at 123 Park Road Lexington in the USDA Service Center.

Voters in the Hollow Creek Watershed District in Lexington County will elect three (3) directors in the November 4, 2008 general election. The current members who are running for re-election are Craig Caughman, Tony Craps, and William Scott.

Responsibilities of the Watershed Directors include overseeing maintenance and repairs to the structures, addressing soil and water issues in the watershed, and preventing structures from being located in the flood pool.

Directors are elected to four-year terms, must be registered voters, and live in the watershed. To be placed on the ballot for election a Statement of Candidacy must be filed with the County Election Commission office by noon, August 15, 2008.

The purpose of watershed districts is to promote concentrated efforts within the watershed to establish needed conservation practices including stabilization of critically eroding areas, drainage measures, and flood control. Stabilization of critically eroding areas includes both mechanical and vegetative conservation practices on gullied areas, roadsides and other sediment producing areas. Flood control measures include flood retarding reservoirs, diversions, and drainage and stream-flow improvement. Many flood control structures are also used for municipal and industrial water supply, fire protection and recreation.

For more information about the Hollow Creek Watershed Board and its duties, contact the Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District at (803) 359-3165 ext. 3.



Did You Know?



The water on Earth has been here since the beginning of time, it contains all the water we will ever have. Earth's waters are constantly in motion in a process known as the hydrologic cycle. The hydrologic cycle has no beginning and no end. No water is gained or lost in the cycle, but the fresh water available to users can fluctuate due to cycles in the weather and changes in water quality. Throughout time, the same water has been transferred from the oceans into the Earth's atmosphere and dropped on land again. That means the water we use today is the same water that was here when dinosaurs roamed the land. Less than 1 percent of all the water on Earth is fresh water that we can actually use. Salt water covers 97 percent of our planet while 2 percent of the water on Earth is glacier at the North and South Poles.

From 2008 NACD Stewardship Material - www.nacdnet.org.

Carolina Coastal Adventure

The district is accepting applications from 9th and 10th grade students to participate in an exciting 3-day environmental workshop that will take place at Santee Cooper's Somerset facility in Pinopolis (Berkeley County) from October 24-26th. The goal of this workshop is to provide an integrated hands-on opportunity to learn, as well as to bring each student to the realization that healthy aquatic ecosystems are valuable resources which provide human communities with clean water, food, recreation, and unique cultural traditions.



The Lexington Conservation District will sponsor students on a first-come, first-served basis. The deadline for receiving applications is Close of Business on Monday, Sept. 15th, 2008. A deposit of \$50 is required and should accompany the application. The deposit will be returned after the camp, provided the applicant attends. Please make your check payable to the Lexington Conservation District. For more information or an application form, please call the Lexington SWCD Office at (803) 359-3165 ext. 3.

Commissioners:

Fred Taylor, Chairman
Rhett Bickley
Dwight Davis
Kathy Hensley
Larry Nates

Associate Commissioners

Raymond Caughman
Walt Douglas
Jim Low
Brent Weaver

Chaplain:

Reverend Garth Hill

District Staff:

Bill Melven, Dist. Manager
Alivia Gunter, Adm. Asst.

USDA - NRCS Staff:

Rafael Mendez,
District Conservationist
Tommy Stone,
Conservation Technician

USDA - OCIO - ITS Staff:

Randy Taylor, IT Specialist

DNR-LW&CD Staff:

Joy Sullivan,
Program Coordinator

Phone: (803) 359-3165 x. 3

Website:

<http://www.lexswcd.org>

District Board Meetings

The Lexington Soil and Water Conservation District Board meets at 4:30 p.m. on the third Tuesday of every month except December at the USDA Service Center conference room, 123 Park Road, Lexington. The public is cordially invited to attend. For information call 359-3165, ext. 3.

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